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5-2WASHINGTON TIMES
28 October 1986

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National

CIA hiring police from major cities

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

The CIA is recruiting police officers from major cities to serve as temporary intelligence officers and to counter terrorism overseas, an agency spokeswoman said yesterday.

CIA spokeswoman Sharon Foster said the agency has hired police officers in the past and a current recruitment drive is similar to "the sort of program we had going for engineers and people we had a great need for in the agency."

Ms. Foster said police officers have investigative skills required by the CIA and although they are not being recruited specifically to counter terrorism "there has never been terrorism on as great a scale as it is now."

She said she did not know how many officers are being sought and from what cities. It was reported yesterday that the police departments of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Houston, Boston and San Francisco are among 18 municipal departments asked by the CIA to allow the recruitment.

Capt. Richard DeLise, spokesman for the Philadelphia police, said police Commissioner Kevin Tucker met with CIA Director William Casey in Virginia in July.

"He did speak to Casey and thought it was very good interaction because of the We The People 200 celebration scheduled for next year," Mr. DeLise said, referring to

Philadelphia's preparation for the 200th birthday of the Constitution.

CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said last week CIA personnel asked officials of 18 major municipal police departments, including New York's, for help enlisting experienced police investigators for the temporary assignments abroad.

She said the request was made at an unpublicized intelligence seminar on terrorism held by the FBI and the CIA July 21 at CIA headquarters in McLean.

Ms. Pherson declined to say how many cities besides New York agreed to assist and refused to identify the police forces represented at the seminar or say how many police investigators the CIA wanted.

She said she believes this is the first CIA attempt to employ large numbers of trained police officers for intelligence work, but declined to say where the officers would be sent or why the agency — which is responsible for U.S. anti-terrorism efforts — was seeking their assistance.

New York City police officials said some of the other departments represented at the July seminar were from Houston, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco. Spokesmen for those departments declined to comment.

Commissioner Tucker acknowledged he attended the anti-terrorism seminar, but declined to say whether he would allow CIA recruitment in the department.